LABOUR MONTHLY

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NATIONALISATION OF THE COAL INDUSTRY

by ARTHUR L. HORNER

UNO AND BRITAIN

by R.P.D.

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"Why still the small type and the blue paper?"

. . . for the simple reason that if we reverted, at the present time, to the 1939 LABOUR MONTHLY with its clearer type, thick white paper and larger and more pages, NINE-TENTHS OF OUR PRESENT READERSHIP WOULD BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN COPIES !

Our paper allocation is based on the pre-war weight of paper consumed by us: and the basic ration has been *one-sixth* of this amount. We are allowed a certain weight of paper each month, and no more—this, in spite of the fact that our orders have increased four-fold. How then, in the war years, could we attempt to cope with increased orders? First we used a thinner white text paper and dispensed with the stiff buff cover. But as the situation became more acute, we produced the first pocket-size L.M. on white paper. But even this was not enough and in July, 1943, we were compelled to use the blue air-mail paper which we have used ever since. Why blue and not white? Because it was proved conclusively, from experiments made at the printers, that this blue paper was far superior to white or any other colour of equal weight in that the print showed through less heavily.

It is essential that we produce the maximum numbers of copies for two reasons: one, so that we do our best to satisfy the demand and two, from the financial angle. Overhead costs are much the same whether 10,000 or 50,000 copies per month are printed; the cost of printing has increased in common with everything else over the past six years and we have refused all along to increase the price of the LABOUR MONTHLY. Our expenses have been cut to a minimum—drastic cuts in advertising—a smaller staff—plus the unhappy knowledge that we were unable to satisfy our orders. This, then, was the situation which faced us in the middle of last year.

And what of the present? We are glad to say that things are a little easier. Recent increases in paper allo-

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

January 23, 1946.

Since the following Notes of the Month on "Uno and Britain" were written, the Soviet Notes to the Security Council on Greece and Indonesia have placed in the forefront these two questions of decisive importance for democracy and world peace. Both these questions turn on the use of British troops for reactionary purposes: in the case of Greece, for the maintenance of an unpopular regime based on former collaborator and pro-fascist elements and established by force of British arms against the National Liberation Movement which had liberated Greece before the arrival of British troops; and in the case of Indonesia, for the reimposition of colonial subjection with Japanese aid against the Republic established by the Nationalist movement. Both are thus pivotal cases of especial importance for this country. A special responsibility accordingly rests on the labour and democratic movement of this country to bring to an end the present policies of reactionary intervention, and to replace them by a policy based on the recognition of the rights of national self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

January 21, 1946.

Birth-Pangs of Uno

FIVE months after the end of the war, in a world of many strains and stresses, unsolved problems and conflicts, and continuing threats to democracy and peace, the United Nations Organisation has come into existence. Despite all weaknesses, the first Assembly represents a step forward. It has carried the nations of the world a step further along the arduous and obstacle-strewn path of transforming the wartime democratic alliance against fascism into a permanent organisation for the protection of peace on a democratic basis.

Cross Currents

Certainly there have been plenty of varied cross-currents, diplomatic intrigues and vote-catching manoeuvres of the old Geneva pattern, and even the last desperate attempt of the imperialist oil interests, masquerading as the Persian Government, to throw a spanner in the works. Apparently these gentlemen and their vociferous press backers regard an internal political crisis of democracy and reaction in Persia as a vital issue for the Security Council, while blandly ignoring the actual war taking place, with bombs, tanks, destruction of towns and villages, and thousands of casualties, in Java at the very same moment as the first Assembly of the peace organisation. These cross-currents, which mirror the actual world situation, should correct any premature naive illusions about the easy development of the new organisation. But they should not blind us to the positive work which has been achieved by the representatives of the fifty-one Governments in London in January, 1946, nor to the platform which has been established for democratic co-operation against the wreckers and against the fomenters of war, imperialist intrigue, atom bomb diplomacy or neo-fascist revival.

Blind Critics

Critics have been vocal. The new organisation has certainly not been born amid any excess of optimism. The same pens and voices which greeted the foundation of the old League of Nations and the Wilsonian myth with a fanfare of acclamation and gullible credulity, now affect an air of weary scepticism and time-worn disillusion. "It is only the old League over again," they complain. "We have heard all this before." "All these

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speeches have been made long ago." In this way cold water is assiduously poured to damp the ardour of any youthful enthusiasts. But, in fact, the current fashionable cynicism is as misplaced as was the old credulity. More. The current cynicism is only the new version of the old credulity. The belief that nothing has changed is itself an illusion. The real disappointment of these critics arises, not because nothing has changed, but because everything has changed. They are expressing their disappointment and frustration in a new world which no longer recognises their values. The world of 1946 is no longer the world of 1919-1939. The superficial similarity of outward trappings with the old League conceals a very different real relation of world forces.

Then and Now

If these time-weary sceptics of today were a quarter of a century ago so carried away with enthusiasm and credulity in the old Wilsonian era and the birth of the League of Nations, this was not unconnected with the fact that at that time the name of Wilson was seen as the talisman against the leadership of Lenin, and the old League was conceived in the crusade against the young Soviet Republic and against revolutionary democracy in Europe, under the aegis of counter-revolution and behind the embattled front of the cordon sanitaire. Today all this is changed.

It Moves

Uno is no longer the exclusive preserve of Anglo-French imperialist reaction, as was the old League. Liberated France passes through heavy travail and conflict to new life; and the would-be architects of the Western Bloc still lament in outer darkness for the dream which has so far failed to materialise. The Soviet Union stands, in full equality, alongside the United States and Britain, in the central commanding positions of the new world organisation; and those still tenacious British reactionaries and intriguers who seek to turn aside from this proud partnership can only seek the doubtful satisfaction of snatching occasional sterile victories on minor issues through mobilising handfuls of unrepresentative votes of minor unrepresentative governments. The voice of the Soviet Union is no longer a solitary voice, as in the concluding days of Geneva. The voices of the representatives of the new popular democratic anti-fascist Governments of Europe, who have won their freedom through bitter underground mass struggle, who have placed their traitors and fascists and collaborators on the gibbet, who have cleared out their landlords and taken over the great enterprises for the people, now proclaim their message from the tribune of the United Nations. History may not move at the speed we might wish when we view the torment of the world today. But it moves.

From Moscow to Uno

If a measure of success was achieved at the first Assembly of the United Nations, this was only rendered possible because the Moscow Conference in the preceding month had restored, even if not yet with full completeness and effectiveness, the co-operation of the three World Powers whose unity or antagonism determines the future of peace or war for the world. The positive value of the Moscow Agreements, which are reprinted for reference in our Documents section, lay not merely in the things agreed; in the correction of the blunder which led to the London deadlock; in the step forward over the Far East; in the new progressive conceptions of joint trusteeship for Korea, specifically directed to the aim of full independence, and based on co-operation with democratic Korean organisations and establishment of a Provi-

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sional Korean National Government; in the assistance to democratic unity in China; and in the arrangements for recognition of the Bulgarian and Rumanian Governments. It lay, above all, in the measure of return to the methods of Three Power partnership which can alone ensure the success of the United Nations.

Vain Lamentations

As after the Crimea and Berlin Agreements, so after the latest Moscow Agreement, the best evidence of the positive value of the agreement reached was provided by the howls and lamentations of the reactionaries and wreckers who had hoped they had buried once and for all the method of Three Power co-operation after the London breakdown. They discovered that the United States had "let down" Britain; that all their sucking up to the United States had been in vain; that the United States and the Soviet Union had reached agreement at the expense of Britain; that the "Big Three," as they chose to put it, had become, in their opinion, the "Big Two":—

It is hardly unfair to sum up the result of the Moscow meeting as a Russian-American compromise, in which Russia has got the better of the bargain, and from which Britain has been left out. Nor is it perhaps unduly pessimistic to see in it the first open signs of a further narrowing down of the circle of real Great Powers from the Big Three to the Big Two.

(*Observer*, December 30, 1945.)

The reasons for the British diplomatic setback are obvious and must be squarely faced. Owing to the inexperience of Mr. Byrnes and America's general diplomatic myopia when any area other than the Far East is in question, the Russians have succeeded in separating their two Allies and Great Britain has been left isolated.

(*Economist*, January 1, 1946.)

Such are the gloomy lamentations of the reactionary pessimists, who were so eager to applaud the diplomacy of Mr. Bevin and rub their hands over the imagined prospect of Anglo-American and Western power-blocs against the Soviet Union, and now like less the taste of the actual outcome of that policy.

Defeat for Whom ?

These howls of reaction only show that the Moscow outcome represented a defeat, not for the interests of Britain (the counterposing of "Big Two" and "Big Three" is pure mischief-making), but for the wrecking tactics of those who sought to drag Britain along a suicidal path of seeking to build Anglo-American or Western European power-blocs in place of the joint leadership of the three World Powers. The compulsion of facts forced a partial correction of British policy at Moscow and a return to the Three Power basis. But the correction is still incomplete. Much still needs to be done to ensure that British policy in world affairs shall be a consistent democratic foreign policy in harmony with modern world conditions. And it is here that important lessons need to be drawn from the proceedings of the first Assembly of the United Nations and the events which accompanied those proceedings.

Warnings Against Fascism

It is significant that some of the most outstanding speeches at the United Nations Assembly were made by the representatives of the smaller European democratic nations which had stood in the forefront of the fight against fascism. All these gave warnings against fascism as not yet dead, and called for real democratic co-operation under the joint leadership of the Great Powers. The Norwegian Foreign Minister declared:—

Let us not forget that Nazism and fascism are still alive and infecting the minds of many people. It will be one of the most important tasks of the United Nations to rid the world system of this dangerous poison, and to achieve the

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acceptance of the ideal of real democracy by all nations.

He continued:—

That is why those who wish to further the cause of world peace would be well advised not to try to find signs of power politics where those do not exist. They should not try to divide the world into separate blocs.

The Norwegian Government see no objection to the Great Powers being given a formal and constitutional influence on world affairs that corresponds to their greater responsibilities. Only thus can the new organisation become efficient.

Thank you, Norway. The democratic common sense of the Norwegian people can teach a lesson to those intriguers in the West who seek to conceal their imperialist power designs behind pretence of concern for the interests of small nations.

Against Nazi Revival

Similarly the Polish Foreign Minister declared:—

Permanent peace is possible if we fulfil three conditions. First, fascism must be destroyed and full democracy secured. Secondly, co-operation of the great Powers must be secured. Thirdly, there must be planning on an international scale in order to equalise the standards of civilisation and progress of all people and speed the development of backward countries.

He continued, with special reference to the dangers of German Nazi revival:—

M. Rzymowski uttered a warning against the rebirth of the evil influence of vested capitalist interests on national policies. That happened after the last war. Germany was helped in the reconstruction of her heavy industries which financed the Nazi movement. Let us not repeat the blunders of the past. Let us destroy the nuclei of fascism wherever they are.

Winged words for the big monopolist interests in Britain and the United States, and their sentimental backers, who once again, in face of the experience after the last war, are already pressing to rebuild German heavy industry and reaction.

Mr. Bevin's Omission

This note of emphasis on the fight against fascism, conspicuous in the speeches of the European democratic representatives, was no less conspicuously absent in Mr. Bevin's speech. The danger of a rift between Britain and Europe as a result of Mr. Bevin's policy was hereby illustrated: between British official policy, representing Anglo-American monopolist interests, which are primarily interested in Europe as an economic field and fear democratic advance, and to which all the upper class former collaborator sections look hopefully for salvation, and the rising democratic outlook and advance of the European peoples. In place of the fight of democracy against fascism, Mr. Bevin preferred to set in the forefront his favourite theme of economic reconstruction as the grand solution, with special emphasis on the capitalist-dominated I.L.O., while rejecting the approaches of the World Trade Union Federation.

Economic Mirage

But economic reconstruction and unification as the path forward for Europe, if divorced from the fight of democracy against fascism, becomes the typical slogan of the big monopolist interests, just as it was the central slogan of Hitler's "New Order in Europe." It will be recalled how in the critical years before the war, when the progressive forces were pressing for a peace alliance of Britain, France and the Soviet Union to check Hitler, Mr. Bevin was advocating his economic solution to check the danger of war by international control and distribution of colonial raw materials and of the wealth of colonial exploitation, with equal access to colonial raw materials for Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy.

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Continuity of Tory Policy

In his speech Mr. Bevin sounded a very different note from the warnings of the European democratic representatives against repetition of the reactionary pro-fascist policies of the ruling class before the war. Mr. Bevin said:—

> In the past thirty years this country and the Commonwealth have been in the forefront of a great struggle, right from the beginning to the end, and have never faltered.

"And have never faltered." During the greater part of these thirty years Toryism has been in power. It is the Tory foreign policy of the last thirty years which Mr. Bevin is thus endorsing. Did Neville Chamberlain never falter? Did Baldwin never falter? Did MacDonald never falter? Was the whole policy of "appeasement" a dream? Were Simon and Samuel Hoare figments of the imagination? At the last election the electorate turned out Toryism not least for its disastrous record of the foreign policy which built up fascism, which betrayed collective security, which helped Hitler to rearm, which brought on the war. The Labour case was powerfully buttressed by the indictment of the "Guilty Men" responsible for this policy. But now, when the election has been won, Mr. Bevin turns his back upon the electorate, and, while all democratic Europe is fighting to throw off the shameful legacy of the past, Mr. Bevin from the tribune of the United Nations proclaims his full approval of the foreign policy of Tory Imperialism for the past thirty years.

Labour Discussion Circles—Please Discuss

In the "Labour Discussion Series" No. 1, *The Rise of the Labour Party*, prepared by Labour Party headquarters for use in the valuable new project of Labour Discussion Circles (we are very glad that the example of the Labour Monthly Discussion Circles, developing since 1940, is bearing fruit) a different view is taken of British foreign policy before the war. Labour headquarters, writing for the Labour rank and file, writes:—

> The Tories posed as supporters of a policy of collective security and of the League of Nations, against the dictators, who held power in Germany, Italy and Japan. But no sooner were they in office than they threw overboard all their professions, sabotaged the League's attempt to check Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia, attempted to appease Hitler and even to induce him to turn his forces against Russia, and connived at Nazi and fascist help to Franco in Spain. . . .
>
> The Labour Party . . . was vehemently opposed to the foreign policy of the Tory Government, which appeared to favour the aggressors, and was fearful that the Tories might embroil themselves, not with Hitler, but with the Russians.

This account might be criticised for omitting the reverse side of the medal, the degree of partial Labour support of Tory policy at the time, the initial support of non-intervention in Spain, the endorsement of Hitler's armed occupation of the Rhineland, the initial opposition to the Communist proposal for a British-Soviet Pact, the applause of Hoare as the Voice of Britain, the Godspeed to Chamberlain for Munich, etc. But this is of secondary importance, if Labour official policy now recognises the correctness of the policies for which the Communist Party fought during those critical years. What is important to discuss is how far Mr. Bevin's present policy of continuity with the foreign policy of Toryism for the past thirty years (carried forward now in anti-Soviet provocations, support of pro-fascist elements in Europe, advocacy of the Western Bloc, etc.) is compatible with the above analysis.

Colonial Embarrassment

A similar contradiction between current Ministerial declarations and the outlook of the labour movement

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arose over the colonial question, when Mr. Morrison in his American tour, in the course of his rollicking speeches and press conferences donned the familiar mantle of J. H. Thomas and declared:—

We are great friends of the jolly old Empire and are going to stick to it.

This caused embarrassment to the chairman and secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, who wrote to the press (*New Statesman and Nation*, January 19, 1946):—

It makes a travesty of our work, a mockery of our sincerity, and a hypocrisy of our professions, if the policy of the Labour Party is to be judged by these irresponsible words of Herbert Morrison. We hope Mr. Morrison will find the opportunity of putting the world right on this speech of his, and not undermining the backbreaking work the rest of us are putting in, in order to convince millions of hostile and suspicious Indians and Africans that we are not all hypocrites and liars.

It will be observed that the protest is directed, not against the actual policy of refusal of freedom to India or military intervention against the Indonesian Republic, but against an indiscreet expression which might be misunderstood as suggesting a slightly imperialist outlook on the part of the Labour Government.

Warning from the Past

When Toryism was routed at the polls in the colossal electoral landslide of 1906, and the Liberal Party was returned to power forty years ago with the most overwhelming parliamentary majority of modern times, this popular upsurge was powerfully dominated by radical anti-imperialist sentiments which had been stirred against the Tory Jingo policy of the Boer War and which found their reflection among the majority of the parliamentary rank and file of Liberalism returned to the new parliament. But the commanding levers of power in the Government, controlling the key spheres of empire and foreign policy, were held firmly in the hands of the tiny ruling group, known as the Liberal Imperialists, represented by Asquith, Grey and Haldane, later joined by Lloyd George and Churchill. Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office continued the Tory foreign policy of Lord Lansdowne.

And the Outcome

Grey's policy was subjected to ceaseless protest and sniping from the radical rank and file in parliament and in the country; but it was maintained. The outcome of Grey's Tory foreign policy ended in the war of 1914, wrecked the programme of progressive social reform at home, and finally wrecked the Liberal Party. The lesson of this warning needs to be learned. Only the blindest can fail to see how powerfully foreign policy governs home policy. Democratic victory at home, to be effective, needs to be carried forward with a vigorous democratic offensive in the sphere of empire and foreign policy.

Foreign and Home Policy

Of what avail to stint and toil in order to achieve the herculean task of doubling the pre-war level of British manufactured exports (which the recognised requirement of a 75 per cent. increase over all exports would necessitate) in order to win precious foreign currency for imports and achieve the necessary balance, or to beg Uncle Sam for loans for poor Britain, if at the same time millions are squandered abroad to maintain the Polish emigré army of 200,000 of General Anders in Italy, to subsidise reaction in Greece, or to dispatch costly military expeditions against the Indonesian Republic? How does it square with the fight for exports to block Soviet-British trade? How does it square with the fight for nationalisation at home to send notes of protest to the Czechoslovak Government against their nationalisation proposals in respect of con-

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cerns which openly sided with Hitler? How does it square with lectures about democracy to the really democratic anti-fascist governments in Europe, if at the same time the most elementary right of democracy is refused to the Indian people—the right to elect by universal suffrage their own representatives in order to choose the form of government and constitution they want? How can the support of anti-democratic and pro-fascist elements abroad fail to encourage the growth of fascism at home? Progressive democracy at home is not compatible with inperialist reaction or pro-fascism abroad. One or the other must conquer.

Demobilisation

Pivotal for the close connection of foreign and home policy is the question of demobilisation. British industrial recovery is starved for lack of man-power. Where is the man-power? We have still to hear the announcement of the Government's promised further plans for speeding up demobilisation, and it is to be hoped that they will show a very rapid increase. But the latest returns reveal that by the end of November, 1945, seven months after the end of the war in Europe, and three months after the end of the war in the Far East, the numbers still in the armed forces, Civil Defence, and employed on equipment and supplies for the Forces totalled 6.6 millions out of an aggregate man-power in employment (including in the Forces) of 20.3 millions, or one-third.

Misuse of Man-Power

One in three of every man and woman available for production still withdrawn from production and held for military requirements, alongside the most urgent needs of home economic reconstruction. It is not altogether unreasonable that the *Economist* should comment: "The numbers engaged in the Forces and production for the Forces (scheduled at 5,393,000 at the end of December) seems out of all proportion to requirements, and yet nobody knows how far and how quickly it is to be reduced." Add to this the wholesale sacking of women workers, who have attained skill and training on "men's jobs," even when they wish to remain in industry (a plain wage-cutting policy to force them back to the lower rates of "women's jobs"), and we have the opposite of any rational policy of the maximum use of man-power for building up British production.

How Many Armed Forces?

At the end of November, 1945, seven months after the close of the war in Europe, the numbers in the armed forces and auxiliary services totalled 4,248,000, or over one-fifth of the total labour force. This, compared with 5,086,000 in May, 1945, or a net reduction of 838,000 in seven months. The scheduled figure to be reached by the end of the year was 3,843,000, or a net reduction of one and a quarter millions (representing one and half millions demobilised, as against one-quarter of a million for the new call-up and released prisoners of war). In the same period General Eisenhower has announced that three and a half millions of the American armed forces have been demobilised. Why should nearly four millions be needed in the armed forces at the end of 1945? The plan so far announced (subject to future announcements) has been stated to provide for 2.2 millions in the armed forces in the summer of 1946 (already reduced from the original plan of 3½ millions). What will be the purpose of this very large number under arms in the summer of 1946?

Policy Reasons

It has been suggested that this very protracted rate of demobilisation, and plan to retain such large armed forces a year after the collapse of the enemy,

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is occasioned solely by difficulties of transport and by the requirements of the orderly plan of demobilisation which has been agreed. The Government has, however, denied that this is the cause. The Lord Chancellor, in the House of Lords, on November 20, 1945, made clear that the determining reason lay in considerations of policy:—

> In the following six months they had to discharge rather more than another 1½ millions, thus bringing down the armed forces from over 5 millions to 2.2 millions or thereabouts. *That was the limiting factor; it was not transport.*
>
> It was too early to say what armed forces we should want at the end of June next, but they could not allow demobilisation to go on to an unlimited extent. *They must have regard to our possible needs and to the situation in various parts of the world.*

This is perfectly clear. The governing factor determining the rate of demobilisation and the retention of large armed forces is foreign policy. And the foreign policy pursued assumes, not merely the requirements of the peacetime army and of the occupation and disarmament of the ex-enemy countries, but expeditionary forces for war in Indonesia and South East Asia, forces for Greece and the Middle East, forces for holding down India, etc.

Peacetime Requirements

When the time comes to determine the level of the peacetime armed forces, it has been calculated that, in the event of a decision to establish a twelve-month period of universal military service, this would represent 250,000; and that, with the additional assumption of a peak "voluntary" enlistment of half a million, this would total a maximum of three-quarters of a million, of whom a proportion would be undergoing initial recruit training and not be available for active service. This total would require to man all three services. On the basis of the existing proportion between the Army, Navy and Air Force, this would give roughly one-half, or a maximum 375,000, for the peacetime strength of the army, including recruits.

Coat and Cloth

When account is taken of the requirements for home defence, for the fulfilment of international obligations under the United Nations, and under the peace treaties for the occupation of Germany and Japan, it is clear that there will be little basis left for squandering man-power in wholesale interventionist adventures, occupations, colonial suppression and minor wars or a grandiloquent foreign policy to beat the big stick and play the gendarme in every quarter of the globe. The present artificial inflated figure of the armed forces, which is already strangling industrial recovery, cannot be maintained; and when the bubble is pricked, the bubble of a would-be Palmerstonian foreign policy will also have to be deflated. British foreign policy, so long used to laying down the law for every country in the world, will have to cut its coat according to its cloth, as a democratic nation co-operating with other democratic nations: and the sooner that time comes, the better for the prosperity and happiness of the British people, and for the peace and freedom of the rest of the world.

Our Responsibility

Public opinion in this country, and the united strength of the labour movement, can speed this day by requiring a radical revision of the Government's foreign policy to conform to the requirements of a truly democratic foreign policy, in close association with the Soviet Union and the United States, with the democratic anti-fascist governments of Europe, and with the advance of the colonial peoples to freedom, on the basis of the

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Charter of the United Nations. Already the volume of protest against the reactionary tendencies in the Government's foreign policy is making itself felt: the strong expressions of opinion on Greece, and the protest last October of seventy Labour M.P.s on Indonesia are evidence of this; and Ministers during the recess have noted in their meetings in the country the extent to which the main point of criticism from their supporters is directed against the present conduct of foreign policy and the toleration of fascism in Britain. A solemn duty rests on the labour movement and democratic opinion in this country, in the face of world democratic opinion, to intensify this pressure in order to hasten the necessary change of policy which is of such cardinal importance for the future, including for the prospects of reconstruction in Britain.

R. P. D.

Nationalisation of the Coal Industry

by ARTHUR L. HORNER

THE Coal Industry Nationalisation Bill has now been presented to Parliament. It will come up for second reading and discussion in the House of Commons within a few weeks, when the views of the various parties will be freely expressed. The attitude of the Tory Party, which at first officially pretended to accept the inevitability of the nationalisation of this industry, is passing through a sharp change. It is becoming increasingly clear, especially from the Kemsley Press, which has already commenced to use phraseology expressive of their frustration, that they intend to make the passage of the Bill as difficult as possible. Every endeavour will be made by them to place responsibility for the fall in the output of coal during 1945 upon the present Government and to conceal from their readers that the fall would undoubtedly have been very much greater had the Tory Government been returned to power.

Tired workmen and exhausted pits have achieved remarkable results during the fourth quarter of 1945: the workmen, encouraged by the National Union of Mineworkers and by their faith in the Labour Government, have drawn upon the maximum of their strength in order to give the best results possible. It should not be forgotten that the main causes for the reduced output capacity of the British mining industry is the reduction in the number of persons employed and their exhaustion due to age and war weariness, as well as to the exhaustion of a considerable number of the pits. These facts, superimposed upon the neglect, inefficiency and worse which prevailed under private ownership, must bear the responsibility for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

In the coming discussions, it is imperative that all progressive elements in our society shall give general support to this vital legislation for the following reasons.

The coalmining industry is the basic industry of the country. The production of Britain's coal cannot be permitted to be the private affair of those engaged in the industry. It is of too great a significance for the whole population, whose future means of sustenance is dependent upon it. Without adequate coal supplies, Britain cannot again become a great industrial country, with a capacity to export manufactured goods on the scale required to enable the purchase of essential goods from abroad. This question enters into every phase of the people's lives, housing, employ-

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ment, demobilisation, social security, etc. A matter of such vital and general importance should, therefore, have become long ere now the responsibility of Government charged with safeguarding the wellbeing of the people as a whole.

To realise this aim it is necessary to secure possession of the industry, either through purchase or confiscation. The mandate sought by the Labour Party was to compensate, and I see no point in holding up or delaying the change over from private to State ownership because of discussions around the question of the principle of compensation. It is necessary, however, to utter a word of warning. Two conditions must be fulfilled in determining the amount of compensation; (1) there must be the strictest application of the principle of "reasonable net maintainable revenue" as laid down by the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool in 1945, and (2) the capitalisation of the new authority should be computed quite apart from what has been paid in compensation. The Board's capital should be fixed at a figure which the industry can reasonably be expected to bear in the future, having in mind the heavy capital expenditure which will be needed to place the industry on its feet. The National Coal Board cannot be expected to bear the full burden of the compensation to be paid if over-capitalisation is to be avoided.

The single possession of the coal mines of Britain is the only way through which this natural resource can be efficiently exploited. Mr. Robert Foot, in his so-called plan, admitted (and found, in general, colliery owners' support for his admission) that the future of the mining industry, even under private ownership, was dependent upon its ability to treat the industry as a national unit. The National Union of Mineworkers accepted this point of view, but disputed the ability of the various district colliery owners to cancel out the sharp differences between them arising from their contradictory economic interests, which were bound to make the unification desired by Mr. Foot unrealisable. This unification of the industry can alone make possible the technical reorganisation based upon planning outlined in the Reid Committee report. Under a system of national unification, the coal resources of the country can be viewed as a whole and their exploitation be determined in a scientific manner. It will now become possible to utilise the most modern methods of production, so that the unnecessary utilisation of human labour upon monotonous, difficult and dangerous work shall cease. Only by this means will it be possible to make coalmining a tolerable industry in which to work and one that will attract its manpower by voluntary means in the open labour market.

The National Union of Mineworkers, however, expects more from the Coal Board which is to be set up than the technical reorganisation, which we consider to be essential.

The Charter herein contained reveals that mineworkers anticipate progressive reforms in the existing working and living conditions as well.

Charter

The Minister of Fuel and Power having raised with the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers the question of the recruitment of manpower to the coalmining industry, and the Committee having undertaken to give it the most serious consideration, has now arrived at the following conclusions.

In the view of the National Executive Committee, the extent to which the following changes are introduced will determine the rate of entry of new recruits to the industry:—

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(1) The modernisation of existing pits and the sinking of new ones as rapidly as possible whilst strictly observing as a minimum the standards laid down in the Reid Committee Report; the provision of adequate compensation for those who become redundant; and at the same time aiming at the general application of the day-wage system.

(2) The adequate and careful training of youth in the various phases of mining operations, and the establishment of a clearly defined scheme of promotion; the provision of further training and tuition required in cases where workers desire to enter for a colliery technician's career.

(3) The introduction of new safety laws to meet the conditions of modern mining and especially to suppress the development of industrial diseases.

(4) The payment of compensation rates to meet incapacity due to industrial injury or disease which shall guarantee the injured person from financial loss and the provision of an adequate income for the dependants of those killed as a result of injury or who die from an industrial disease.

(5) The average wage standards shall not be permitted to fall below those of any other British industry.

(6) The restoration of the 7-hour day for underground workers; the introduction of the 40-hour week for surface workers; and the establishment of the 5-day week without loss of pay.

(7) The continuation of the principle of the guaranteed weekly wage when the Essential Work Order is withdrawn.

(8) Payment to be made for two consecutive weeks' holiday and six statutory holiday days in each year.

(9) The provision of pensions for mineworkers who cease to be able to follow their employment after 55 years of age and the payment of a subsidiary pension from the industry in addition to pensions provided from other legal enactments.

(10) The building of new towns and villages of a high standard and situate at places calculated to enable miners to have increased opportunities for social facilities and to break down the segregation of mineworkers and their families from the rest of the community, accompanied by the provision of adequate transport services at reasonable rates.

(11) The complete reorganisation of health and welfare services so as to put a brake upon the wastage of manpower due to ill-health.

(12) Compulsory medical examination with training arrangements at full wages pending employment as a skilled workman in another industry if withdrawn from the coal-mining industry on medical grounds.

The National Union of Mineworkers, having in mind the manpower crisis which exists and recognising the complete dependence of our country's economy upon coal production, calls upon the Government through the Minister of Fuel and Power to give guarantees that effect will be given to the foregoing measures in accordance with a timetable and a progressive plan.

It is realised that whilst the manpower requirements of the industry will tend to fall as the industry is modernised, during the immediately ensuing years it will be necessary to depend upon the technical equipment now in existence. The only permanent source from which new manpower can be drawn and adequately trained is youths under 18 years of age. In the past the maintenance of the industry's manpower by the continuous supply of youths to compensate for wastage has come mainly from the ranks of mineworkers' sons. The mining community, however, is not willing to accept a special responsibility for the supply of new mining labour. Quite rightly, miners and their wives have come to regard their sons as citizens entitled to seek a livelihood more congenial, less dangerous and better paid employment in the same way as do the sons of other people. Young persons will only be attracted to the coal-mining industry in sufficient numbers when it offers to them conditions of employment which compare favourably with those offered in other industries and a higher standard of living than has been the lot of those who have toiled in the industry in the past.

It must, however, be appreciated by all concerned that the foregoing measures, even given most favourable conditions, will take time. The sinking of new mines is not a matter of

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months, but years. The amount of labour which can be employed in sinking a shaft is limited by the area of the shaft in which the men are called upon to work. It is true that new methods must be sought and probably will be discovered, for expediting the sinking of shafts. It is not anticipated, however, that these developments will produce any revolutionary change in the rate of sinking. Similarly, we are anxious that the Coal Board shall lay out the workings, the roadways, etc., of the future mine, according to a plan made beforehand and that the old hand-to-mouth methods of private enterprise will be abandoned.

In mines to be reorganised, the cost of which is to be met out of the £150,000,000 provided in the Bill, months, if not years, must elapse before the *full* benefits of new methods of work are experienced. A great deal will have to be done and will remain to be done after the first years of public ownership. That progress is possible on a gigantic scale is demonstrated not only by experiences in Holland, U.S.A., Poland, Germany and the U.S.S.R. before the war, but also in certain mines of this country. To achieve this advancement it will be necessary to institute a new appreciation of the possibilities latent in the situation. Old standards of judgment which have limited productive capacity and which have impeded the adoption of new methods must be set aside. The technique of coalmining can no more afford to be static than the technique applied to the production of any other commodity.

The danger of the static mind applies not only to the actual technique of the industry but, in addition, to the relations between it and its manpower. The highest supervisory and technical grades must in future be regarded as employees of the industry. It is true that the functions and the role of various categories will differ and that remuneration will not be equal irrespective of responsibility, training and capacity. There will, however, be the possibility of introducing into the industry a team spirit which has never previously existed. In the past, the supervisory grades and technicians have been held to be the representatives of the colliery companies, whose duty it was mainly to concern themselves with the application of measures calculated to reduce costs at the expense of the general body of workers. In future, all categories will be compelled to appreciate that the struggle must take the form of a joint struggle against Nature, to extract from the bosom of Mother Earth the required quantity of coal.

It is only to the extent that the people engaged in the industry, whoever they may be, are able to master the problem of production that it will become possible to raise and maintain the standard of life of all concerned at the level which men who are performing such vital work deserve from their country.

I desire to stress that the so-called nationalisation of the mining industry must not be regarded as a legislative act which automatically will supply satisfaction to all the needs. It is rather the beginning of a process which will enable the progressive overcoming of all the disadvantages, human and technical, which have been attached to the mining industry up to the present time. It would be exceedingly dangerous if the idea were to become widespread, that having secured the state ownership of the mining industry, all needs will automatically be supplied. Producers as well as consumers of coal must now appreciate that it is not easy to eradicate the mental state of mind which has grown up in an industry in which the most savage industrial

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struggles have taken place over a number of years. The habit of mind of the workmen expressed in their subconscious opposition arising from their fear, especially towards new methods of work, will continue for a long time. Educational and propaganda means will have to be devised to remove these fears and we shall succeed because the industry in future must be in a position to give clear guarantees that progress in methods of work resulting in greater productivity shall not be permitted to result in hardship and destitution for thousands of workers, which was undoubtedly the case in the past.

* * *

State ownership of industry in class society is, however, not Socialism. The purchase of various industries will not terminate the kind of society in which we live. The system in which one class lives by the purchase and exploitation of the labour power of the other is not brought to an end.

State ownership under a democratic government is, however, a progressive and important stage in the march towards greater productive efficiency, made possible by the unification of industry nationally through single ownership. It will enable many measures to be undertaken in the national interest, and will bring benefits to the workers engaged which have not been previously considered possible or even desirable by those who were in a position to make decisions.

The framework of the machinery to be instituted in the mining industry in the new set-up has already been partially revealed in the "Bill for the Nationalisation of the Coal Industry." There is to be a "National Coal Board" composed of nine persons chosen for their capacity to manage the affairs of this great vital industry. Each is to be an expert in his particular field of activity, i.e., production, commerce, finance, science, health and welfare, labour relations, etc. At the same time they must be capable of operating collectively and of arriving at decisions on the various questions which arise from time to time. In short, they will function as an efficient Working Board of Directors answerable to the Minister of Fuel and Power, and through him to Parliament.

The Mineworkers Union will not participate in a representative way in the decisions of the Board, which will occupy the position of employer in relation to employees.

The union will still have to contend for improvements for its members which it holds to be justified, as would be the case under private ownership, although it expects much better reactions from the new organisation than it experienced from the old. The Board, functioning as an employer, may resist demands which involve fresh financial obligations. The union, therefore, must preserve its independence and remain quite free to organise or to withhold the sale of labour power, i.e., it must reserve to itself the right to strike. It is unlikely that the need will arise to the same extent as before—it is hoped not at all. I refer to this because it makes clear the fact that class relations will continue. The change from private to state ownership in class society, is not fundamental; that is to say, it does not produce a change in the character of our existing society which will remain capitalist society.

It is important to stress this, because we are not entitled to anticipate results from it which can only be realised through socialism. That there will be an improvement is beyond question. Moreover, the union members will apply themselves at every level to the task of assisting the work of the Board, through joint consultative

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organs which must be established for the purpose at the pits, in the districts and at the centre in London.

The union members who may be appointed to positions of responsibility in the new organisations will cease to have any further organisational associations with the union, for two reasons. This is necessary in the first place because they cannot function as employer and employee, and secondly, the union cannot permit any persons other than its chosen representatives to act on their behalf, or even to appear to do so.

This does not mean, however, that such persons can be regarded as having "gone over to the other side." On the contrary, they are men who are expected to convey to and impress the workers' viewpoint upon the Board, and to permeate the whole organisation with a high appreciation of the workers' contribution and to cause their colleagues to place a high value in concrete terms upon it.

This most interesting and vital experiment in the field of public ownership, brought about by a Labour Government, with the overwhelming approval of the Miners' Union and the electorate generally, must be made a success. To fail would result in a coal shortage so serious as to wreck the reconstruction plans, and in such an event to bring down the Government. Even limited success could slow down the implementation of these plans, and cause discouragement in carrying the policy of public ownership into other industries whose efficiency expressed in increased prodictivity is so vital to a country called upon to export for imports to the extent Britain is today.

* * *

Thus while the nationalisation of a single industry or even of more than one industry, is to be distinguished carefully from the fundamental change into a socialist society, it is nevertheless of very great importance. The nationalisation of the coal industry, with some aspects of which I have dealt in this article, is a democratic measure, absolutely necessary at the present time and a great step forward in the right direction.

Persia

by MAURICE RIDLEY

(This article, written in October, 1945, gives general information on the political situation in Iran which will assist our readers in understanding current developments as reported in the press. The writer has served with the armed forces in Iran, and has a wide knowledge of recent developments in that country.—Ed. L.M.)

IRAN (or Persia) is a mountainous plateau. The central and southern parts are dry and scarcely populated. The most densely populated regions are northern and north-western, western, south-western and eastern. The northern part, especially the coastal area of the Caspian, is very fertile and prosperous.

Agriculture is very primitive and inefficient and water shortage presents a serious problem. The country is believed to be rich in mineral deposits, but so far, apart from oil, little is known of these. The country possesses vast oilfields in the south, west and in the north. Industry and transport are still only very poorly developed.

According to official statements, the population is believed to be somewhere between 12 and 18 millions, consisting of Persians, Assyrians, Jews, Turkmens and others. The main

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official language is Persian, but in almost every part of the country some special language or dialect is spoken. The main tribes are Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtars, Kashkaies, Shahselans, Turkmen, Arabs and some smaller ones in the south and the south-east like Dashti, Boir-Ahmedi, Baharlu, Mamsain and Baluchis.

The tribes have always been a source of worry to the central Government. After the entry of the Allies into Iran, in September, 1941, and the abdication of the former Shah, the tribes were armed in an unknown and somehow mysterious way, and are still armed. Recently it was stated in the Persian press that a meeting of main southern tribes was called and the question of forming a bloc in those parts was discussed. It was reported that a foreign diplomat (allegedly British) was present at this conference.

The chiefs of the southern tribes like Kasam Shirazi, Naser Khan, Khosrow Khan Khaskai and others are well-known for their pro-British sympathies and other ties with the reactionary forces in the country. The latter had always alluded to a mysterious "Blue Army" which is supposedly to come to the rescue of the country in its dire need and save it eventually from the Red Revolution. This "Blue Army" is believed to consist of the armed tribesmen.

In the south, there is constant friction between the chiefs of different tribes. This factor to a certain degree mars the prospect of their full mobilisation by the reactionaries. The Turkish tribes living on the border of Soviet Turkmenistan are more progressive as a result of their contact with their neighbours.

The Constitution and Government

The Iranian Government is nominally a constitutional monarchy. Until recently, it was a one-man semi-fascist dictatorship. After the entry of the Allies a certain political freedom was allowed, which has resulted in a tremendous advance in the social development of the country.

According to the constitution, Iran should have two chambers of Deputies—the Commons, called the Mejlis, and the senate. The latter has never been formed. The Iranian Parliament has at present 130 members; they are elected for two years, supposedly by secret ballot, but nobody below 45 to 50 years of age remembers ever taking part in a General Election (with the exception of the last one). In the Mejlis there are several so-called fractions, which with the exception of the Tudeh Party fraction have no party support whatsoever behind them. They are just temporary and unstable groupings of M.P.s who are almost continuously grouping and regrouping. The reactionary fractions form what is called the majority bloc, and the others, including the Tudeh party fraction, form the minority group. The majority bloc is led by figures like Said Zia, Malek Madani, Dr. Taheri, Kasemi, Ezdi—all well known for their pro-British sympathies. Said Zia is the acknowledged leader of the reactionary forces in the country. He is the man who in 1919, by the help of the British, organised a coup d'état in the country, forced Ahmed Shah of the Kadjar dynasty to resign and later left Reza Shah in sole control of Iran. For the past four years he has played an important role in organising and directing the reactionary, anti-Soviet forces in the country. The Parliamentary leader of the Tudeh Party is Dr. Keshavamz, who is a member of the Central Committee of the party. He is a good orator and influential public figure.

The term of the present Mejlis should expire in February, 1946, but the reactionaries are trying to postpone the general elections until after the evacuation of Allied troops from Iran. The coming elections constitute the

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major problem in the life of the country: a problem which is closely related to the problem of the evacuation of foreign forces so emphatically demanded by the right wing. In the northern parts, which is the Soviet zone of occupation, the Government apparatus is to some extent cleansed of the most reactionary, pro-fascist elements. Therefore the democratic organisations have a better chance of expansion in these parts in comparison to the other regions. The chances are that if freedom of election is provided and guaranteed, the democratic organisations will gain a substantial victory at the polls. If the troops were evacuated, the reactionaries could immediately start a purge of their own among Government officials in the north, re-establishing their own men in the commanding positions. And as the northern constituencies elect the majority of the members of Parliament, it is clear that the victory of the democratic forces there would mean a change of balance in the whole political life of the country in favour of the progressive elements.

Social Structure

At present Iran is a semi-feudal state, which is approaching the capitalistic stage. Industry, mainly light industry, has developed to some extent during the past 20 years, but does not play a decisive role. The main branches of industry are textiles, sugar refineries, chemicals, cement and other building materials. There is no iron and steel industry. It is worth noting that a considerable part of the existing industrial plants belong to the Government. The capitalist class is not yet strong enough to wield major political influence. The ruling class consists of big landowners or merchants. It is in a very small minority indeed, making up less than 0.3 per cent. of the average total population of 15,000,000. The middle class—small landowners, government employees, shopkeepers, craftsmen and tradesmen—is not numerous, totalling some 10 per cent. of the population. The industrial working-class is only in process of formation. According to the most reliable information there are some 500,000 workers in Iran, i.e., less than 3 per cent. of the total population. Of these, the approximate figure of the industrial working-class is 150,000 but there are numbers of workers employed in small workshops and unskilled labourers engaged in house and road building. The rest, more than 86.7 per cent., are peasants and herdsmen (tribes). The peasant class, the most numerous of all the social classes, is the most backward and least politically active. They rent the land from the landowner or from the Government, which owns 3 per cent. of the total arable land.

The peasants have living conditions which are indescribably miserable. Until recently, they had no organisations whatever. Of late the Tudeh Party started to form peasant unions in the north, mostly in Mazendaran, but they have not yet assumed a mass character. Only in Azerbaijan are the peasants active politically. The Tudeh Party has great influence among them, as it demands distribution of the land among the peasants, beginning with Government owned land and then buying through the Government big estates, and selling them on repayment to the peasants.

The trade unions in Iran have grown considerably in the past few years. According to figures published in the Iranian press, trade union membership amounts to more than 100,000. Almost all the trade unions are united in the Central Council of Iranian Trade Unions, formed in Teheran in 1944. This group is under the political leadership of the Tudeh Party, and in fact represents its main mass organisation. Some months ago, a Soviet trade

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union delegation visited Iran on the invitation of Iran workers. It received a tremendous welcome. Iranian trade unions were accepted at the World Trade Union Conference in Paris, and given one seat.

The Government arrested the Iranian trade union delegation on its way to the conference, so it was decided to send another delegation, which reached Paris. (The Conference protested against the Iranian Government for interfering with the journey of the delegates.)

The oil industry is by far the most important in Iran and until now has been almost a monopoly of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. For a number of years representatives of the other big oil interests of the world have been trying to break this monopoly. Representatives of the Shell group have been in Iran since the middle of 1942 negotiating for concessions.

At the annual general meeting of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, held in London on October 16, 1945, the chairman stated that the output of oil products from Iran during the war years was:—

Year	*Tons*
1939	8,309,707
1940	8,167,286
1941	5,422,102
1942	8,285,089
1943	8,878,689
1944	11,521,555

The sales of oil in 1944 were greater than in any previous year in the history of the company.

The Allies Enter Iran

On August 25, 1941, the Allies entered Iran. Reza Shah first ordered his army to resist, but within a few days, it was crushed. The whole Reza Shah regime was shattered. The regime was known throughout the Middle East for its reactionary, pro-fascist, anti-Soviet attitude. Foreign interests backed the late Prime Minister (Fowghi) one of the outstanding political figures of the Reza Shah regime, who proposed to prolong the existing 12th Mejlis, elected or rather appointed by the Shah. The prolongation of the 12th Mejlis gave the reactionaries what they needed most, namely, a breathing space to reorganise a come back (this time under the guise of democracy). By the time of the general elections for the 14th Mejlis (the present term) the reactionaries had established themselves in the strong points of government apparatus, and held the necessary key position so indispensable in Iran for victory at the polls. The last general elections were carried out within a period of over six months; the reactionary elements were "elected" in a very short time after the beginning of the elections from the southern and western constituencies. Elections in other parts were postponed and prolonged. In Teheran, there were on the whole free elections, but even there, as reported by the press, fakes of ballot were observed.

Last of all came the elections in the north. Seven candidates of the Tudeh Party were elected in the north, and one from the south. (From Ispahan by the textile workers). In Tabriz, out of nine members elected, the mandates of three democratic M.P.s were rejected by the reactionary majority.

The main event at the beginning of the present Mejlis was the discussion of the mandate of Said Zia who was brought in from emigration to head the reactionary forces in Iran. Before he even crossed the frontier he was elected as an M.P. from Ezd. A strong campaign was conducted for his come back, colossal funds were spent to popularise him and present him as a democratic leader who would establish genuine democracy. The British evidently put much faith in him. The plot in which he was to play the leading role would have succeeded if it had not been for the timely intervention of democratic forces who answered by a

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united and firm stand. The Tudeh Party and its organs led the first major clash between the democratic forces and reaction after the allies entered Iran. Said Zia is trying to unite the merchants, landowners and capitalists to form a single united front against the young progressive forces. He leads a party called "Nehzate Melli" (National Movement) which is the headquarters of the reactionary forces in Iran. It attacks the Tudeh Party on the grounds that it is "unnationalistic"; that it supposedly gets its orders from the Soviet representatives in Iran. It should be borne in mind that the ruling class of Iran for the past generations were and are under British domination. The reactionary forces enjoy full support and backing of the foreign vested interests in Iran and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. has a great deal to say in the life of the Iranian people. Almost all the influential government officials are openly or secretly pro-British.

After the fight over the mandate of Said Zia, the next major issue was the oil problem. During the office of Saed, the Iran Government was considering the proposals of several English and American oil companies for oil concessions in south and south-eastern regions of Iran. These talks were kept secret from the public, and were made public only when the Soviet Union came with similar proposals for oil concessions in the northern regions. The Soviet Government offered guarantees as to the wages to be paid and the labour conditions to be observed. They also undertook to provide adequate housing in all the areas they developed, to train Persian technicians, and to return the wells to Persia after an agreed period. Fifty per cent. of the shares of the proposed Soviet company were to be in Persian hands, which is in striking contrast to the royalties of between 16 and 20 per cent. paid to the Persian Government by Anglo-Iranian and its subsidiaries.

An intense press campaign was started by the reactionary forces, which stressed the negative points of granting concessions to foreigners (not a word being spoken of the southern oil concessions, in whose interests they were actually speaking). They launched a hysterical campaign of slander and blackmail against the Tudeh Party, which organised a mass demonstration of some 20,000 people demanding jobs for the unemployed released from the Allied Transport Organisation in Iran. The Tudeh Party did not actually openly support the granting of a concession to the Soviet Union, but it demanded that the terms of the proposal be made public, so that the people could compare them with the terms of the southern oil concession. Despite the support of reactionaries, the Government was forced to resign.

Next came the Baiat cabinet, the candidate of the centre. It followed a more or less democratic policy, but became the object of successful attack by the reactionaries and was followed by Hakirni, who also did not satisfy the needs of the reactionary forces, as he refused to include in the Cabinet representatives of the extreme right and pro-British elements. The right wing formed a majority bloc inside the Mejlis and succeeded in bringing into office M. Sadr, a well-known reactionary and a leading figure of the old regime. Out of 120 M.P.s in the Mejlis, the new Government received 70 votes; opposition had 40 votes. All it can do at present is to break the quorum, thus depriving the Government of the ability of passing its bills. There is no doubt whatsoever that if opposition unity is maintained, it has every chance of forcing the Government to resign. The situation is grave, because, encouraged by the withdrawal of the Allied forces, reaction-

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aries have noticeably increased their pressure on the democratic forces, which face suppression of their papers and closing down of their headquarters and clubs.

The political parties of Iran are divided into three main groups: Democratic, Centre and Reactionary. The parties forming the democratic front are the Tudeh Party, the New Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, and several other small groups of progressive elements.

The Tudeh Party is considered even by the reactionaries themselves (and testified by Reuter's correspondent in Iran) as the best organised and compact political group in the country. It demands democratisation of Iran, the faithful carrying out of Iran's constitutional law of some 30 years ago, better conditions for workers, peasants and intellectual workers, democratic freedom, industrialisation of the country, distribution of Government owned land, and formation of representative government of all the democratic forces.

The centre group in Parliament has great influence and notable authority among the people. On the main issues so far involved it has followed a rather shaky and unstable line. It opposed Said Zia, and also opposed Soviet proposals for an oil concession. It took an active part in the minority bloc in the Mejlis, fighting the reactionary Sadr cabinet. It is continuously changing sides—joins the reactionaries or backs up democratic forces. Of late, some disintegration has been observed in the ranks of this group. The left wing is steadily approaching the democratic front, while the right is approaching the reactionary front. Lastly, the Said Zia party, as already noted, is the nerve centre of the reactionary forces.

During the former regime there were only two newspapers in the country, which were, of course, run by the Government. Now there are some 150 to 200 more or less regular newspapers and periodicals in the Teheran area alone. Until recently they were fairly free to write what they wanted to, though subject to occasional suppression by the Government.

The Bill outlawing Communism, passed in the former regime, still exists, on the grounds that according to the constitution, the official religion is Moslem, and all anti-religious tendencies and ideas are outlawed. Recently the reactionary government of Sadr, preparing the ground for the coming general election, has tightened the regulation of martial law, suppressed almost all the democratic papers, closed down the headquarters of political parties, and forbidden public gatherings.

Foreign Trade Problems

by MARGOT HEINEMANN

TO balance exports with import trade is one of the most formidable economic tasks facing the Labour Government and the British people. The war has finally made it impossible to muddle through and maintain living standards on the old basis of a backward industry, privileged Empire markets and interest on overseas investments. This is all to the good: but it is undeniably awkward in the short view.

The Government estimates that to break even and meet commitments to the U.S., Britain must increase her pre-war volume of export trade (£470 million in 1938) by 75 per cent. Since pre-war exports were about 16 per cent. of output, this means adding another 12 per cent. to pre-war pro-

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duction (the wartime addition was 25 per cent.) and, what is harder, selling it.

The *Economist* further estimates that, in view of the shortage of coal (our principal raw material export), this will mean roughly doubling the export of manufactured goods (£350 million in 1938). Since Britain in 1938 already did one-fifth of the world export of manufactures, it is clear that the target can only be reached if there is a tremendous expansion in world trade as a whole.

The target must be hit within the next five years at most. The U.S. loan gives a certain breathing space (it is calculated, if we are lucky, to cover the likely deficit over four years or so, though it may prove insufficient for this). On the other hand, the conditions of the loan mean that there can be no attempt to evade the problem for a time by imposing a further period of exchange restrictions on "sterling" countries, or tying them to buy from us.

The very size of the problem indicates the hopelessness of trying to solve it by the old methods of a cut-throat trade war between the great industrial exporting powers — primarily, between the U.S.A. and Britain, but with Canada and others also demanding their cut—using to the full all the pre-war weapons of tariffs and preferences, restrictive quotas, blocked exchanges, and competitive currency depreciation. The net result of all these in the 1930s was a severe reduction in world trade, and a more-than-average reduction in the trade of Britain. Any attempt to revert to this —say to rebuild a closed "Europe bloc" against the dollar—is still less practical now, in view of Britain's weaker economic position vis-a-vis the U.S.A. Certainly it is not the basis upon which a lasting peace and world advance towards Socialism can be built. And to hang grimly on to what imperialist tribute we can, and thereby alienate the new forces who can help us most, would be suicidal: the recent protest to Czechoslovakia (that the payment of compensation to British owners of nationalised industries must be in pounds) is a glaring example.

The only solution for Britain is (1) co-operation between Governments to expand world demand and world trade, and (2) radical modernisation and control of industry at home so that we no longer need to sell at the point of the imperialist pistol. Moreover, we have the strongest interest in seeing that normal industrial production is quickly restored in the world, using to the full the resources of the U.S.A., Britain, Canada, Sweden, to achieve it. Otherwise we shall be fencing off for ourselves, not export markets, but deserts.

The world's needs of manufactured goods are measureless. The new democracies of liberated Europe begin their life with an industry so shattered that it would take a generation to repair from their own resources; in the U.S.S.R. the devastation is enormous; in many countries the people lack any clothing at all or food to keep alive. Countries outside the occupation zone have been starved of manufactured goods during the war years; they urgently need replacements of plant, clothing, and all the goods we are short of in England too; and they have accumulated balances of over £3,000 million which they have so far not been allowed to spend for this purpose. At present the power in the best position to supply these needs quickly is the U.S.A. The contribution of Britain, however, is important to these countries as well as to ourselves.

The greatest long-run expansion must clearly be looked for in exports of capital goods. A higher *proportion* of our future export trade will be in such items as machinery, locomotives, lorries and industrial chemicals, and a

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smaller *proportion* in the cheap cotton piece-goods which we once supplied to the whole world (though this does not mean the volume of trade in cotton must fall). The reason is that as more countries become industrialised, they first produce for themselves the simpler products such as textiles, clothing and shoes, while requiring a greatly increased volume of machinery, plant, raw materials and the more complex industrial goods from outside.

At the same time, the rising standards which industrialisation and modern agriculture make possible (and which the development of the world trade union movement will help to secure) will also increase the demand for higher-quality consumer goods, for radios, bicycles, cutlery and good quality utility clothing.

The speed of industrialisation, and with it the expansion of world and British trade, depend very largely on the scale of the loans available (and U.S. loans in particular). We have, therefore, the strongest interest in aiding the process, possibly by pressing for the International Investment Bank to be set up as part of the Bretton Woods scheme to make generous advances to other countries for reconstruction. But without radical reorganisation of production in Britain we shall not be able to take advantage of this or to make our limited manpower suffice for home and export.

To expand British exports the Government must get a new tempo into the programme of modernising British industry. In view of the shortage of man-power to meet export and home targets an all-over man-power plan is needed. Nationalisation and reorganisation of fuel and transport cannot be a leisurely process, and there should be no more hesitations about nationalising steel — the monopoly that adds so greatly to our export costs.

Among other industries, priority attention must be given to engineering, as the industry which can mechanise others and itself make the largest direct contribution to exports. As Jack Tanner has pointed out in the *Daily Herald* (January 8, 1946) the Government should already be able to set rough output targets for the industry area by area, and thus end the uncertainty which at present paralyses production and prevents the workers using their initiative to reorganise the work for exports as they did for war. If engineering orders cannot be arranged without credits, let the Government get ahead and arrange them. It is a scandal that firms should be going out of production and workers drifting out; we dare not let the industry melt away to the pre-war scale.

The working-parties in several consumer industries should soon be reporting. It is understood that some of them—cotton, for one—have run into serious opposition by certain employers to the more drastic reorganisation proposals of the unions. The Government should make it very clear that our trade position does not allow tenderness for vested interests to hold matters up and that its compulsory powers will be used whenever necessary.

A public investigation into the costs and prices of monopolised industries, such as chemicals and machine tools, should also be held, so that the effect of deliberate restriction and price-fixing on exports can be limited.

Throughout industry, we have to break away from the "luxury hand-produced export" idea, and understand that our big new markets will be won only on condition that high quality is combined with modern production.

The old cry, "Keep down Wages for the Sake of Exports" is a real danger to our purpose. The demand of the

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workers for a larger share in the national income does not in any way worsen our trade position; the more we have to economise on imports, the more important it is that the workers should be in a position to buy their share of the supplies that are going. Not only is a large and prosperous home-market essential to economical production for export, but one of the main obstacles to an *immediate* increase in exports is the shortage of labour in key industries because of low wages. Shortage of foundry workers, for instance, has prevented textile machinery and other industries from reaching their export target; the same is true of cotton and wool where the labour force is increasing at a snail's pace—not to mention coal. Improved wages and conditions here would *improve* our balance of payments. So, too, would increases to the farm workers, which would enable us to keep up home food production; and it would be well worth putting back sixpence on the standard rate of income-tax (paid mostly by the well-to-do) to get the food.

A greater degree of Government control of the export trade itself will be more and more called for as reconversion is completed. Otherwise we shall have concentration by the exporters exclusively on the easiest markets—those with which they already have old connections, and which for the time being have plenty to spend—at the expense of those which require more trouble and keener prices, and which may also require credits. For the time being, there may be big money in selling Savile Row suits to the Argentine, more than in supplying ordinary standard clothes to France or Yugoslavia—but which trade offers the greater chances for the future? We have already seen that the motor manufacturers, who foresee keen competition abroad, would rather sit pretty in their sheltered market at home. Again, it is hopeless to think we can trade with Europe unless, for the time being, we give credits: and that means a further demand on our man-power which must be budgeted for and controlled by the Government.

The other side of the policy must be the development of international trade through appropriate agreements. This is, above all, a matter of the right foreign policy—of alliance with democratic States—and most of the difficulties at present arise from a lack of this.

In some quarters in the labour movement it is held that the proposals put forward by the U.S. Government for consideration by an International Conference on Trade and Employment, and accepted "on all important points" as a basis for discussion by the British Government, preclude any planning of international trade. I believe this view to be incorrect (1) because we are dealing here not with a cut-and-dried agreement between Brtain and the U.S., but with broad proposals which become effective only in so far as they are endorsed by international agreement between many Governments; (2) because the proposals themselves have many positive features. It is no news that the U.S.A. is a mighty imperialist country with immense bargaining strength, that the U.S. capitalists want to increase their exports, and that they want to break into the privileged markets of the British Empire. We should therefore leave moral indignation and surprise on this score to the City of London and examine more closely the practical scope for international and national planning within this framework and how far it may need to be modified.

In general, the proposals aim at the reduction, by international negotiation, of tariffs and preferences; to limit the use of competitive export subsidies and quantitative trade re-

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strictions; and to avoid discrimination against the exports of particular countries. These points are not international planning, but they do not preclude it: whereas the free use of these weapons really does.

Space forbids a full analysis, but the following urgent measures, in line with Labour policy, appear to be fully compatible with the proposals*:—

(1) Strict restriction of imports, while balance-of-payments difficulties exist, to those which are necessary to increase output or directly benefit workers' living standards.

(2) Government bulk purchase of foodstuffs and materials overseas and at home, at prices guaranteed in advance, thus enabling the producer to plan ahead and cheapen production.

(3) Government assistance, by mobilising credit for the purpose, to exporters wishing to deal with countries (such as Yugoslavia, France or U.S.S.R.) which require credit owing to war or other causes.

(4) Government grants and loans for colonial development, based on the export specifically of British goods.

(5) Further development of any kind of Government and semi-Government trading organisations (such as British Overseas Cottons) to provide better information to exporters, reduce merchanting costs, and receive and allocate bulk orders from other Governments to the industries concerned on a planned basis.

(6) International governmental commodity controls, aimed at guaranteeing prices, especially to small producers, and planning consumption ahead to avoid any need to restrict production.

The precise meaning of "non-discrimination" in operating these agreements would be a matter for some hard bargaining. But on purely commercial grounds, in concluding agreements, the Government should have in mind that democratic or Socialist countries, with part or all of their production under national control, are likely to develop very fast economically, and therefore to offer the greatest expansion and stability as export markets.

The settlement to be negotiated with India (and other colonial countries) in relation to the liquidation of our sterling debt is left to our discretion in the agreements, so long as *all* balances released are convertible. The easy solution would be to write off as much of the debt as possible as "India's contribution to the war effort" (as though the Indian economy had not already contributed beyond its means, as the toll of four million famine dead bears witness). This would further embitter economic relations; and it would offer no solution to the old problem of 400 millions in India too poor to provide a market for British goods. The right solution is to settle part of the debt by a further sale of British securities in India; to release really substantial balances already in a year's time, confident that part will be spent in Britain, and that even if part is spent on machinery in U.S.A. (as it will be), British exports will also benefit from Indian economic development in the longer run.

There is, no doubt, room for differences to arise between the U.S. and British Governments on the interpretation of what are clearly compromise proposals. But it should be remembered that the trade proposals are intended for endorsement by an international conference shortly to be called, and are to be put into effect by international negotiation. Those Socialists who are sincerely anxious about the rights of State trading and national economic sovereignty under these proposals should remember that other countries—notably the U.S.S.R. and the new European democracies—are at least equally concerned, and that a joint line-up of Britain and these forces within any conference could not but affect the interpretation of the

* The qualifications about non-discrimination and so on, which I have no space to include, do not as far as I can judge affect the main argument.

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agreements. It is therefore of considerable importance that the British Government's policy towards the U.S.S.R. should be one of wholehearted friendship and not the present one, which compels the Soviet Union to proceed with the greatest caution in entering such international arrangements as Bretton Woods at all.

It may well be true that all these measures together, while putting Britain's trade with the rest of the world on a sound basis, will not enable us to meet our commitments to repay the U.S.A. unless she either becomes a great importer of goods or continues to lend greatly to the world. There are progressive and Labour forces in the States which already well understand this responsibility. If such a policy is not forthcoming, then in five years' time or so the same problem will face Britain and a whole number of other countries; and they will be in a stronger position, economically and politically, to settle the matter than they can be today.

International policy must therefore be in line with our economic perspectives. Subservience to the U.S.A., slowing down control of industry to please Wall Street, would be as fatal as entering into an all-out trade war. Aid to the democratic countries to advance their economy, independence for the colonies, unity with the U.S.S.R., these are the key questions.

Syria and Lebanon

by NICOLAS SHAWI

(Fraternal Delegate from Syria and Lebanon)

(We are pleased to print the speech delivered to the Congress of the Communist Party on November 26.—ED., L.M.)

I am happy to bring here to your Eighteenth Congress the fraternal greetings of Arab Committees, the greetings of our two Communist Parties, those of Syria and Lebanon. My pleasure is the greater, as I will also have the opportunity here in London to tell you a little about our Arab problem and tell you that your recent victories at the General and Municipal Elections have been received with great joy and confidence by the people of our countries.

Our two Parties, the Syrian and Lebanese, have been in existence nearly eighteen years. They have known illegality and imperialist terror in all its forms. They have participated in all political battles and they now constitute a force to be reckoned with, and are an important factor in the national liberation movement, and in the working-class movement.

We have succeeded in the course of these eighteen years in developing experienced party cadres, educated in Marxist-Leninist lines. We have a daily paper published in Beirut in Arabic and which appears in all Arabic countries. In the early part of the war, our party was brutally treated and many of our leaders and militants were imprisoned. We only came out of prison after the collapse of the Vichy regime in Syria and in Lebanon in the summer of nineteen hundred and forty-one. Since then, our two parties developed considerably. We have seen our Syrian Communist Party grow from a thousand members in 1941 to ten thousand in October, 1945 (out of a population of three millions). The Lebanese Party has grown from 1,500

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members in 1941, to 15,000 last September (out of a population of one million).

To turn now to some aspects of the political situation.

A breath of liberty is now touching the Arab world. The victory of the united people over the forces of fascism and reaction has given a new impetus to the great popular National Liberation Movement. Everywhere imperialism is faced with large masses of the people demanding justice for their national democratic aspirations. Egypt demands the withdrawal of British troops and modification of her treaty with England. Iraq also demands treaty revision and national democratic liberties. Palestine demands the abolition of the mandate and an independent, democratic regime—the only guarantee of frank collaboration between the Arab and Jewish peoples. Syrian and Lebanon, sovereign and independent and recognised as such by the Soviet Union, United States, Great Britain and almost all the other powers—these, too, demand the withdrawal of British and French troops and they call for an end to the imperialist machinations which are shaking their country and which have as their aim the sharing between themselves of privileges and the occupation of vital strategic points. They declare that the economic restrictions imposed on them by certain English monopolies (such as U.K.C.C.) should be removed.

All those people who have played a full part in the Allied war effort, who have put their land and resources at the disposition of the United Nations forces and thousands of whose sons have been in the ranks of the Allied Armies—those people ask that today the common victory over fascism should also be their victory and that the period of peace which is commencing should be for them a period of national democratic liberty.

In the Arab countries today there is open war between the different imperialist groupings. English and American capital come up against each other almost everywhere. English imperialism which, in the course of the war controlled the greater part of the economy and of the strategic positions in the Arab countries, now sees the penetration into these regions of American capitalism, particularly in Saudi-Arabia, in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

On the other hand, the great prestige of the Soviet Union among the masses of the Arab people who greeted with enthusiasm the glorious victories of the Red Army, and Soviet support for the national and democratic demands of the Arab peoples, above all, terrifies British reaction.

Furthermore, the whole of British imperialist policy in relation to the Arab countries, actually tends to bar the way to the two powers, United States and Soviet Union, and to make the Arab world into a closed circle under its direct control, and with French participation in the Levant. For it must be said that French imperialism is in such a situation in Syria and in Lebanon, especially after the events of June, that they count absolutely on British reaction to save them and get them out of their dilemma—for the price of some kind of concession, of course.

You will remember with what warmth Mr. Churchill defended the privileges of the French imperialist in the Levant.

So, the Conference of British Ministers of the Middle East, held last September in London, and the Anglo-French talks which followed and were meant to lay the base for the famous Western Bloc, also had as their objective the "co-ordination" of the policy of the two imperialisms in the Near East, essentially directed—whether in Europe or in the Near

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East—against the Soviet Union and the United States. By this arrangement, British reaction would be installed in Syria, and in this way she would also be behind Turkey and would more readily be able to steer her in an anti-Soviet direction. You will remember that the Weygand-Wavell Plan of 1940 was directed, not against Hitler, but against the oilfields of the Caucasus across Turkey.

However, the great victory of the French Communist Party at the last elections and her triumphal part in the Government, has changed the face of things. We are sure a democratic note will be sounded in French policy in relation to Syria and Lebanon. A note which will put an end to the old policy of domination and terror which has so strained the relations between our two peoples and the people of France.

But side by side with these plans which I have outlined, British reaction has other plans. It is the old habit; reaction plays a number of games at a time. Now the shouting is about the Arab League. Now, although the Arab League is not a popular democratic organisation, but solely a group of representatives of different Arab Governments where British influence if fairly strong, is nevertheless obliged, by mass pressure, to do something. And this thing, however small, is directed before all against British imperialism. So British reaction shouts against the Arab League and tries to stop it from dealing actively and concretely with the problems of the national independence of each of the Arab countries. They try to make it discuss general, abstract questions, or try to suggest its joining up with those States who signed the pact of Sandabad—Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, to create a Near East Bloc, which would, of course, be controlled by British imperialism and directed against the Soviet Union. Or else we have another kind of propaganda—for a Greater Syria—a royalist State grouping Syria, Transjordania, part of Palestine and part of Lebanon, under the throne of Emir Abdullah of Transjordania — recently invited to London by Mr. Churchill.

In short, everything is done by the imperialists to maintain their domination and their strategic position in the Arab world. Every means are used to weaken and divide the liberation movement. English imperialists encourage every fascist element that yesterday was taking its orders from Berlin. In Egypt they support the fascist party, "Young Egypt." In Lebanon they do the same thing. They direct the Hitlerian Party, "Popular Syrian Party," founded in 1935, by agents of Germany and Italy. This party did not, before the war, hide its attachments to Rome and Berlin. They had their black shirts, their Roman salute, their flag with the swastika, etc. During the war the "militants" of this party were interned. In 1944 they were set free on the intervention of certain English fascist agents and with their help got official permission to re-form their party and resume their activities. Since then, they have never failed to receive every necessary British support. Recently, armed agents of this party, now called "Popular Party," made trouble at a demonstration in Beirut and murdered the anti-fascist militant, Edward Chertcani, as well as wounding several others. British officers and officials recently attended a reception given by this party.

Here, in brief, is the general outline of the situation for us. We need your help, comrades, both in Parliament and among the masses of the British people. Demand, with us, the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Syria and Lebanon. Support us in our great national fight for independence. Help us in our campaign to exterminate the roots of fascism in our

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country and for the dissolution of the "Syrian Popular Party"—a fascist party in the service of reaction and imperialism. Demand with us that the economic restrictions still imposed on us by British monopolies should be put to an end. Help us to speed the collapse of imperialist plans and to safeguard and strengthen democracy and a republican regime in our country.

In conclusion, comrades, I wish you success in your Congress and in the implementation of the decisions of your Congress. And before leaving this platform, permit a militant Arab Communist to say to you with all his heart: Consolidate your party, comrades, strengthen it every day on a solid Marxist basis; for each militant Communist who comes to swell your ranks is another fighter in the great world battle for democracy, for liberation of the peoples, for Socialism.

Long live the British Communist Party.

Mandalay and After

by G. CARRITT

A NEW Burma has arisen from the devastation and the misery caused by the Japanese occupation. It is not a surface difference nor one coming simply from the bitter experiences of occupation, but rather from the fact that Burmese themselves have consciously played a part in finally ejecting the Japanese from their country. The myth of the happy-go-lucky, easy-going Burman is exploded; it is a people today that does not wait upon the dispensations of foreign authority. A strong wind of colonial liberation is blowing in the Far East, and Burma, no less than Java and Indo-China, seeks to fashion her own future.

This is a change not to the liking of the imperialists who are still under the impression that the war was fought to make his colonial plantations and mines safe for the *pukka sahib*. As far as Burma is concerned, therefore, a double tactic is being pursued; on the one hand an "iron curtain" of secrecy is let down to obscure the activities and existence of the Burma guerillas and their Anti-Fascist League; on the other, so far as the existence of a popular movement has to be admitted, an endeavour is made to present its all-in national unity and representative character as incompatible with "democracy in the western sense."

Whilst the 14th Army marched and fought from the Chindwin to the Irrawaddy, at home *The Times* (December 12, 1944) was pessimistically warning the public "not to expect too much from them (the Burmese) in the early stages of reoccupation." Their "intense nationalism" was adduced as a reason for believing that our approach would be met with at best apathy, probably with active hostility.

During the first stages of our march into Burma the remote villages had hardly been touched by the national liberation movement; they had accepted Japanese occupation passively. But although we were told that the villagers were hostile (and our relations with them were based on this untested assumption) there were no hostile acts.

At Maymo, a hill station north-east of Mandalay, we heard our first accounts of organised resistance and the population came out to welcome us. In this town is a mixed population of Burmese, Indians, Anglo-Burmese

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and Anglo-Indians. The latter groups were persistent in trying to win the sympathy of the British with stories of their sufferings and their losses. They tried to arouse mistrust against the Burmese guerillas in order to hide their own record of collaboration. Yet it was here that for the first time we saw Burmese carrying arms. Nobody explained to us who they were or why they had arms. We were just left to pick up for ourselves that guerillas were working under British and American officers . . . a bit of knowledge intensely interesting to white soldiers operating in jungle with (as he supposed) hostile natives all round.

Only south of Mandalay did the army move into country actually held by guerilla forces. Guerillas appeared in large groups amongst us carrying the most modern arms. Still no greetings or official explanation. In fact, when they came in with prisoners or information, they were simply tossed a few coins or a tin of fish as if someone had done us a small favour. There was no recognition of the heroic sacrifices made by thousands of young Burmese in their patriotic struggle.

In fact, of course, higher up and in some special department, there was a very real appreciation of what the guerillas were doing. As early as 1943 SEAC was in touch with the Burmese anti-fascists and communists. Their leaders were brought out of Burma for discussions and elaboration of plans. British and American officers, in increasing numbers, were parachuted into guerilla-held areas. Modern arms were dropped. At the end of 1944 SEAC authorised a rising in Arakan. By the end of the year 10,000 well-armed and organised detachments were ready and the Burma National Army, under Major-General Aung San, was secretly deployed to co-operate with the British forces. In the face of this evidence there can be only one explanation for the ignorance of *The Times* and the attitude of the local commanders: higher authorities were not prepared to give public recognition to the existence of the Anti-Fascist Organisation and its guerilla warfare.

Even when it became impossible to hide completely the extent of guerilla support for our forces, the authorities still maintained the pretence that we were occupying a hostile land. The Civil Affairs officials, many of whom owed their appointment to prewar business connections with Burma, proceeded to persecute the Communist and democratic parties, who had organised the resistance movement. Many were arrested as collaborators, whilst the real Quislings, ex-officials and "loyal" elements, were placed in authority. Paper stocks and books owned by the Communist Party were seized, and prosecution for their possession instituted. At a time when Communist leaders, representing the Anti-fascist Organisation and the National Army, were discussing with SEAC joint action against the Japanese official censorship forbade mention in the Burmese press of either the Communist Party or the Anti-Fascist League.

Such was the dilemma facing British imperialism. It was being forced to use a movement whose very existence it abhorred. But simply to refuse official recognition could not, and will not, conjure out of existence something which has inspired the Burmese people to such heroic efforts for national liberation. As in Europe, resistance to fascism has given birth to something which can no longer be controlled by the old forces of reaction. But what makes the dilemma worse for the imperialists is that there was in Burma before the war no united national movement and a comparatively low level of political development. Burma, having been kept industrially backward, had a very small

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working-class, mainly immigrant, and, except in Rangoon, unorganised; nor had the national bourgeoisie developed to compete with foreign interests; the peasantry as a class, although deep in debt and impoverished, were not confronted, as in India, with a bitter class struggle against the landlords. In other words, the imperialists might well judge that despite periodical outbursts of national revolt, Burma would remain a comparatively safe preserve for colonial exploitation.

But whilst backwardness is a typical condition of all colonial countries, it is equally typical that foreign rule, based upon intense exploitation, police repression and industrial stagnation, results in the very rapid growth of a militant national movement in which the leadership more and more falls upon the working-class in alliance with the peasantry and in active co-operation with the national bourgeoisie, whose participation in the economic life of their country is frustrated by foreign interests. The Japanese occupation gave a tremendous stimulus to all the latent forces of national liberation movement in Burma. Suddenly, as it seemed, a strong Communist Party has emerged, giving undisputed leadership to the whole national movement and drawing upon the experiences of international Marxism in general and of the Soviet and Chinese communists in particular. Instead of the pre-war disunity of rival groupings within the national movement, when individual politicians represented and spoke for little more than themselves, imperialism is now faced by a movement that enjoys the support not only of every party and leader of standing in the country, but also the support of the national minorities whose suspicion of Burmese nationalism had always been a strong card in the hands of British officialdom. Instead of a country with virtually no organised working class movement or leadership, it is faced with a national movement led by the Party of the working-class and determined to win for Burma a position of freedom and equality amongst the united nations.

The Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, has returned from New Delhi, where, with his staff of 1,000 civil servants, he spent the period of Japanese occupation in safety. His first job was to form an Executive Council which will have purely advisory powers and will not be elected. Although condemning this puppet Council and demanding immediate elections and a sovereign Constituent Assembly to frame Burma's constitution, the Anti-Fascist League nevertheless considered it necessary to demand representation for itself on the Council in order to make available its overwhelming influence in the country for immediate tasks of reconstruction whilst continuing to fight for an extension of democracy and its national demands. With this in view, they argued that, since the Anti-fascist League represented the whole country with the exception of a few individual politicians with no popular backing, a majority of the nominations for the Executive Council should go to the Anti-fascist League. Further, they wanted the right to name the members of the League who should fill these seats on the Council in order to ensure a fair balance between the Parties represented on the League. And thirdly, they insisted upon the right of their representatives on the Council to report back to the Anti-fascist League and to be guided in their work as advisers to the Governor by the declared policy of the Anti-fascist League.

The Governor has vehemently rejected these democratic propositions made on behalf of the national movement. He claims the right to decide who are the representative national figures in Burma today.

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In place of putting the League's claim to be representative to the test of elections as they demand, the Governor prefers to instal his own stooges in the Executive Council. In the next place he maintains that it was undemocratic procedure for the Anti-fascist League to nominate their representatives, and he makes it clear that he is not prepared in any case to accept the Communist Thein Pe on his Executive Council. Finally, he regards the Anti-fascist League's demands that their representatives should take instructions from the movement they represent as "depriving them of their individual judgment."

Imperialist reaction has for the moment triumphed by the exclusion of Burma's undisputed leaders from the interim administration. It hopes, in this way, to consolidate its position and to re-establish in authority some puppet politicians before the 1948 elections. Setting out to be the champion of democracy against the "totalitarian" ideas of the national movement, the imperialists are employing every possible manoeuvre to disrupt the newly achieved national unity of the Burmese, and by a demonstrative display of police interference to provoke the national movement into a breach of "Law and order." But their experiences and their sacrifices in the struggle under Japanese occupation will guarantee that the virile leadership, with its Marxist understanding, will consolidate its position and lead the people forward to freedom.

Correspondence

Dear Comrade,

I feel that I must write and protest against the review of Beatrice Webb's biography which appeared in the December issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY. I am inclined to think that the reviewer fails to note the contrast between the freshness and interest of the first part of the book, which leans very heavily on Mrs. Webb's own diaries and the confusion, comparative dullness and occasional inaccuracy of the latter part. I can myself testify to the fact that Margaret Cole is wrong in her description of Beatrice's attitude towards British Communists and it is obvious that she is quite unable to understand the Webbs' change of heart with regard to the Soviet Union. But I believe that the review reveals a really serious underestimation of the pioneer research work done by the Webbs. A natural dislike of Fabianism seems to have blinded the reviewer to the Webbs' immense positive contribution to the labour movement, from which present day students can still learn much and to which their attention might well have been directed. If their earlier influence was "poisonous," surely "Soviet Communism"—still a standard work—has made handsome amends and demands more generous acknowledgment from the LABOUR MONTHLY.

Yours fraternally,
EVA C. RECKITT.

The "generous acknowledgment" of the undoubted high value of "Soviet Communism," which our correspondent feels should be made in the pages of the LABOUR MONTHLY, *was made in the pages of the* LABOUR MONTHLY *on a scale exceeding that of any other journal when the book appeared. The entire "Notes of the Month" for January,* 1936, *were devoted to a special review under the title "A Landmark of the Labour Movement," which covered 22 pages of full appreciation, and which elicited from the Webbs a personal letter, dated January* 17, 1936, *describing it as incomparably the best review of their book which had appeared.*

The small current review to which our correspondent takes objection was not a review of the Webbs, but of an unsatisfactory and inadequate Fabian biography of Beatrice Webb. So far as it touched on the work of the Webbs, it was only concerned to explode the myth which has grown up in the ten years since "Soviet Communism" appeared, and which has tended to forget entirely the character of Fabianism and even to present the Soviet Union as a kind of demonstration of the success of Fabian methods.

EDITOR, LABOUR MONTHLY.

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Book Reviews

Discovering Philosophy

Social Thinking by Hyman Levy (Cobbett Press, 7*s*6*d*).

THIS IS a book of philosophy; and it meets a very great demand. People cannot live without a philosophy. We do need to base our lives on ideas of the nature of the world we live in and of our place in it. Neither the traditional ideas, nor the rather barren mechanical materialism which used to be presented as the main alternative, can any longer satisfy people.

If, however, anyone starts to read Levy's book hoping to find in it ready-made answers to all the problems of philosophy, they will be disappointed. "Philosophy," says Levy, "like science, has to be discovered, not invented." And the object of this book is to help with its discovery. It is more a book about *method* than about conclusions. It deals with how to think in order to meet the sort of problems we are facing.

Levy makes very clear from the start that his idea of the problems is not an academic one. In his introductory chapter he describes his boyhood in the slums of Edinburgh, and he tells how he came to realise that the great problem to be tackled was that of ending the sort of conditions he describes. But to know how to do that, hard thinking is needed. "It may seem surprising," he writes, "that in attempting to understand the social problem it should be necessary to begin so far away from the main task. . . . But social and political analysis demands a philosophical approach; not *any* philosophical approach, but that approach which the changing world forces on us."

The main content of the book deals with the method of rightly understanding *change*. Here Levy's treatment of the significance of contradiction, opposition and conflict, as occurring in the world and as reflected in the process of our thought, is very useful. Throughout the book he intersperses sets of examples and exercises; and any reader who takes the trouble to tackle them will find them extremley stimulating and suggestive.

This is, then, a book which should be read not only by "philosophers" but by all who are concerned with social problems. But it is not a book that leaves you satisfied—and this is, perhaps, one of its chief merits. If it is understood, it will leave you very dissatisfied, and wanting to go further into the questions which it raises. In this way I believe that *Social Thinking* can serve as one of the best introductions to Dialectical Materialism; and readers of it ought to go right on to read (or re-read) such books as Engels' *Anti-Duhring* or Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*. It will help very much towards a clearer and fuller understanding of dialectics.

M.C.

France, then and now

Ten Essays on the French Revolution. Translated by W. Zak. Lawrence & Wishart, 7*s*6*d*).

France is Divided by Jean Dorgot (F. Muller, 8*s*6*d*).

THE LONG period of social development in France which began with the demand for a Constitution in 1789 is now being expressed in the struggle for a new Constitution embodying the principles of a regimented democratic France. Neither of these two books deals directly with the situation in which the new Constituent Assembly is meeting, but both are essentially linked with the present-day problems that this Assembly must face.

The first of the above two books is at once more remote from these problems in time, yet more fundamentally related to them. These essays, written just before the war, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Great French Revolution, are the work of outstanding members of the French Communist Party. Three of them are now among the most honoured names of France's martyred dead, others, like the scientist Prenant, have survived Nazi concentration camps, others again, like Thorez and Duclos, are leaders of the biggest political party in France. Their studies are penetrating Marxist analyses of all aspects of social development in France, providing the basis for understanding the present-day problems and justifying the claim of the French Communist Party to be the inheritor and continuer of the great democratic traditions of the French Revolution. T. A. Jackson contributes an able introduction.

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Jean Dorgot's book is also translated from the French. It is an account of the inter-war years, but has neither method, nor continuity of treatment nor breadth of view. At first it is difficult even to see what the author is aiming at. It eventually becomes clear that his obsession is the stationary population, the need for new blood by influx of foreigners and the undemocratic treatment meted out to them, if poor or politically "left." He couples this with a scathing exposure of the corruption of the Third Republic, naming names and showing the logical outcome of this corruption in the treachery of Vichy France. His conclusion is the need for a new "Rights of Man," the fundamental document of the Constituent Assembly of 1789. But the vital forces of the French people are pressing for more than that.

C.P.D.

Remote from Greece

Greece by A. W. Gomme (Oxford University Press, 1945, 3*s*6*d*).

PROFESSOR GOMME may be an expert on Ancient Greek history, but he is no expert on Greece today. He has often visited Greece, but with an outlook similar to that of the English ladies who admired Mussolini because "he made the trains run on time." Metaxas, he says, put an end to political freedom, but "all was not lost; for Metaxas put an end, for the time being, to that "political instability. . . ." So, of course, did Hitler and Mussolini.

Again, "Metaxas worked hard for his country; his patriotism was simple and sincere." Why? Because, though fascist, he did not join the Axis. And as for the British capital and intrigue that kept Metaxas in power; of this Professor Gomme utters not a word, though sufficiently caustic about the Allied treatment of Greece after the last war.

The origin of the Metaxas dictatorship is blandly explained in the words of those who instituted it. The Parliament of 1936 "was prorogued to deprive the Communists of their power to play off one group against the other." There were at that time fifteen Communists in Parliament!

Gomme apparently sees no contradiction between this statement and his assertion that "class distinctions scarcely exist, labour is not self-conscious; the poor, equally with the well-to-do, are divided between Liberals, Republicans, and Royalists." In fact, trade unionism in Greece dates from around 1910 and the Communist Party from 1917.

The book, dated 1945, in the series THE WORLD TODAY, has no mention of any event since 1940. P.S.

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Prospectus post free from C. D. Parker, M.A., LL.D., Director of Studies, Dept. JK17,

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Continued from page ii. of cover

cation (including a special quota for export which we were denied previously) now make it possible for us to print 20,000 copies per month in place of the 12-14,000 copies to which we have been restricted. Our problem now is "How to ensure equal distribution of these extra copies?" since even this increase is by no means enough. Firstly, we have decided to allow more postal subscriptions; secondly, at long last, we are sending our customers overseas the quantity ordered instead of the bare 20 per cent. which we were sending previously; thirdly, we are sending additional copies to bookshops and wholesalers; and lastly, we are reserving 1,000 copies for special cases of hardship through restriction. What do we mean by "special cases"? For example, during the past you may have tried unsuccessfully to order a copy through your newsagent; the bookshop may have been forced to refuse your order—thus you are not counted among our present customers.

If you wish to be sure of getting your copies regularly from now on, write to us immediately and we shall be able to supply. But you had better write in quickly if you want to make sure of your copy.

In conclusion, we should like to assure all our readers that we ourselves are far from satisfied with the present format: we don't like the small type nor do we approve of the blue paper! We have active plans in hand for a change-over to an improved format, and especially to white paper, at the earliest possible moment.

Meanwhile, we wish to thank all our readers for their forbearance and patience in this matter. We ask their co-operation in accepting our policy to serve the widest possible public by preferring to provide a technically inferior production for a larger number, rather than a technically superior production for a handful.

Manager, LABOUR MONTHLY.

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